

## SYNOPSIS

*The Buddha of Suburbia* is being set in the late seventies. It tells the story of a young adult Karim Amir who considers himself as “an Englishman born and bred”, and his father, Haroon Amir, who is the ‘Buddha’ of the title. By reading the novel, it can be seen that the stories of both Karim and Haroon have been affected by history, in particular the history of colonization. Karim is considered as “a funny kind of Englishman” because he is “emerged from two old histories”. He is the son of a mixed Indian-English marriage, and growing up in London suburb. In this novel, it is told that he is torn between the Indian ancestral traditions which both intrigue and repel him, and the English society that tends to look on him as either a welcome exotic or an outsider to be feared and hated. It also demonstrates the conflict Karim feels for being English and Indian at the same time, the feeling of belongs nowhere. He takes a stab at acting as a way of feeding his creative impulses and making sense of his conflicting emotions and cultures. Finally, Karim finds himself a place in the theatre world. While Haroon who comes from an upper class Hindhu background, is so disappointed with the reality when he first arrived at London. The image of England that he sees does not coincide **with** the image of England that fulls of glory and power he learnt from the colonial education he got. Haroon has spent most of his life assimilating the English culture. After many years of “trying to be more of an Englishman”, he starts to explore Buddhism and set himself up as a ‘guru’. He realizes that it is more comfortable for him to become an Indian himself and to appropriate the white English society’s preconceived ideas concerning his Indian identity. As a conclusion, this novel shows how Karim finds himself and his father re-finding his identity and what it means to be Asians living in Britain.

## BIOGRAPHY

Hanif Kureishi was born on December 5, 1954 at Bromley, England. Just like his character in *The buddha of suburbia*, Karim Amir, he was also the product of an interracial marriage between a Pakistani immigrant and an English woman. Kureishi **grew up** with the experiences of the racial and cultural clashes that later he addresses into most of his works. The inspiration for his **work** has been drawn from his **own** life's trials and tribulations as a hybrid of two different races and cultures. Kureishi decided that he wanted to be a writer from a young age, and began writing novels that were considered for publication while he was still a teenager.

He studied philosophy at the University of London, and then supported himself by writing pornography under the pseudonym Antonia French. After a humble beginning as an usher for the Royal Theater, Kureishi later became the theater's writer in residence. His first play, *Soaking up the heat*, was produced in 1976 at London's Theater Upstairs. His second play, *The mother country*, won the Thames Television Playwright Award in 1980. His breakthrough came with his first play for the Royal Court Theater, *Borderline*, about immigrants living in London. This led him to have his **work**, *Outskirts*, performed by London's Royal Shakespeare Company.

Kureishi made a rebound in 1990 with his first semi-autobiographical novel, *The buddha of suburbia*. It is about the life of a young bisexual man, who is half-Indian and half-English, growing up in London. It won the Whitbread Book of the Year Award for the first novel category of the Booksellers Association of Great Britain and Ireland. Kureishi said that this novel is autobiographical in some ways. Like his character in the novel, he **is** the child **of** Indian father and an English mother and he also grew up **in** suburban Bromley. He experienced first-hand of racism. Therefore, in *The buddha of suburbia*, he wrote about suburban social climbers, artistic poseurs, upper class intellectual twits, Roll-Royce liberals, scabrous working-class heroes and also England's Asian and black immigrants.

Source: "Screen Writer Turns to the Novel **to** Tell **of** Race and Class in London"

[<http://www.nytimes.com/books/97/11/09/home/kureishi-race.html>]